United Nations UNW/2011/8

Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

Distr.: General
1 March 2011

Original: English

Annual session of 2011
27-30 June 2011, New York
Item 1 of the provisional agenda*
Organizational matters

Report of the first regular session of 2011, 24 to 26 January 2011

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* UNW/2011/L.3.

11-24862 (E) 180311

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I. Organizational matters

1. The first regular session of 2011 of the Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) was held in New York from 24 to 26 January 2011.

2. The President of the Bureau of the Executive Board of UN-Women, U. Joy Ogwu (Nigeria), opened the session, underlining the historical importance of the first meeting of the newly established Executive Board of the newest entity in the United Nations family, UN-Women, under the leadership of the Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director, Michelle Bachelet, the former President of Chile.

3. The Executive Board would work closely with the Executive Director in a creative and positive spirit to ensure that UN-Women delivered, excelled and set an example in institutional governance that others would seek to emulate. The President recognized those who had worked very hard towards the merger that made the establishment of UN-Women possible, especially the Secretary-General, the Deputy Secretary-General and the former Assistant Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, Rachel Mayanja.

4. The President noted that while it was a time of new beginnings, most of the problems that UN-Women was established to address were not new. Women everywhere continued to face major challenges in accessing and enjoying their human rights despite years and decades of effort. Limited opportunities for participation in society, poor access to resources, gender-based violence, trafficking in girls and young women, sexual violence (especially in situations of armed conflict) and lack of access to water and basic social services left many women in conditions of deprivation.

5. The Board looked to the Executive Director to steer the organization creatively to address age-old challenges and stereotypes that continued to deny women not only their rights but especially opportunities to contribute to development. Meeting the high expectations would require unique and creative approaches, particularly within the challenge of limited resources, both human and financial.

6. The President underlined the need to accelerate efforts to complete the human resources process to ensure that the requisite staff was in place and ready to take on the important tasks ahead. The Executive Director's experienced leadership would find new ways to extend the discourse that gender equality is not only a matter of a basic human right and to bring more to the realization that it was the quintessence of sustainable development. Empowering women was the other half of the development equation. The last piece of the puzzle to fall in place was the concrete demonstration by the international community of determination to fulfil its own commitments to UN-Women. The support of traditional and new donors alike would be crucial to the achievement of the noble objectives of UN-Women in the months and years ahead.

7. In conclusion, the President reaffirmed her support to the Executive Director in translating global commitments on gender equality into reality for women and girls all over the world.

8. The Executive Board approved the agenda for its first regular session (UNW/2011/L.1) and its workplan, as revised.

9. The Executive Board approved the report of the organizational session (15 and 22 December 2010) (UNW/2011/1) and the overview of decisions taken at its organizational session for 2010 (UNW/2011/2).

10. The Executive Board adopted its draft rules of procedure (UNW/2011/6). The President thanked the members of the Executive Board for working to achieve a consensus on the rules of procedure. She thanked the Vice-President of the Board, Zahid Rastam (Malaysia), who facilitated the informal consultations, and Markus Pallek of the Office of Legal Affairs of the Secretariat, for their important contributions to the process.

11. The Executive Board approved the tentative workplan for the annual session of 2011 (27 to 30 June 2011), as orally amended.

12. The Executive Board also adopted the tentative annual workplan for 2011, presented in a conference room paper, as orally amended.

Statement of the Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

13. The Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN-Women congratulated the members of the Executive Board elected on 10 November 2010 and the members of the Bureau elected at the organizational session of the Executive Board on 22 December 2010: as President, U. Joy Ogwu (Nigeria), and as Vice-Presidents, Zahid Rastam (Malaysia), Olha Kavun (Ukraine), Carmen Arias (Peru) and Magnus Lennartsson (Sweden).

14. In the four months since she had taken up her duties as Executive Director of UN-Women, Ms. Bachelet had been meeting with many constituencies, including Member States, women's rights advocates, private sector and other civil society voices and colleagues in many parts of the United Nations system. The messages from these groups were that UN-Women must focus on a few issues and achieve visible results; that UN-Women must work in partnership with the United Nations system, not in competition with it; that it must build on what it had achieved, but at the same time do even better; and that it must "think outside the box". Most importantly, support must be prioritized to national partners at the country level. There were basic support services that countries and the United Nations system expected UN-Women to provide, and the capacity to provide them must be strengthened.

15. In that context, the Executive Director explained that she had developed a vision and a 100-day action plan to guide the entity's work while it elaborated the priorities and results that would inform the strategic plan, which she looked forward to developing with the Board's strong guidance and support.

16. The Executive Director, in presenting her vision and 100-day action plan, emphasized the potential inherent in every member of society — men and women, girls and boys. There was no limit to what women could do, and women's strength, industry and wisdom were humankind's greatest untapped resource. The challenge was for UN-Women to demonstrate to its diverse constituencies how this resource could be effectively tapped in ways that benefitted everyone. She was determined

that UN-Women would be a catalyst for change. The vision of UN-Women was one where men and women had equal opportunities and capacities and the principles of gender equality were embedded in the development, peace and security agendas. The key objective was to build national capacity and ownership to enable national partners to formulate gender-responsive laws and policies and to scale up successful strategies to deliver on national commitments to gender equality.

17. To meet this objective, UN-Women would centre its work around five core principles: (a) providing demand-driven support to national partners to enhance the implementation of international agreements and standards; (b) supporting intergovernmental processes to strengthen the global normative and policy framework on gender equality; (c) advocating for gender equality and women's empowerment, championing the rights of women and girls, particularly those who are most excluded; (d) leading and promoting coherence in the United Nations system on gender equality; and (e) acting as a global broker of knowledge and experience, aligning practice with normative guidance.

18. Behind this vision was a strategic approach to leadership that was central to how UN-Women would work. There would be some areas where countries would look to UN-Women to lead, and there would also be many areas that had an impact on women's lives where UN-Women would form strong partnerships, bringing attention to the gender dimensions that might be overlooked. There would be other issues of great importance, where UN-Women could add value by ensuring that the work of the United Nations system was coherent on gender equality through its coordination role.

19. UN-Women would focus on five thematic principles, taking into consideration specific country contexts and capacities: (a) expanding women's voice, leadership and participation; (b) ending violence against women; (c) strengthening implementation of the women and peace and security agenda; (d) enhancing women's economic empowerment; and (e) making gender equality priorities central to national, local and sectoral planning and budgeting. In addition to those areas, UN-Women would support United Nations partners who were leading the response in areas such as HIV/AIDS, migration, the rule of law, environmental degradation and climate change, social protection and maternal and child health. The Executive Director announced a number of actions, described in a summary vision and 100-day action plan distributed to the Executive Board.

20. With regard to resources, UN-Women would mobilize political and financial support for work on gender as a whole, including by United Nations partners. Partnerships and resource mobilization would be accelerated as part of the 100-day action plan. Relying on long-standing partnerships with Member States, UN-Women would encourage predictable multi-year pledges to mobilize at least 50 per cent of its core support annually. The Executive Director urged the Board to continue to show strong support for gender equality by assisting UN-Women in meeting its resource target.

21. To do this, partnerships would be essential, and would be expanded with the private sector, foundations and individuals, including through new electronic giving and Internet campaigns. Partnerships would be built with Governments and civil society, with parliamentarians and community-based leaders, targeting groups that were the most excluded. The research and training agenda of UN-Women would depend upon strong partnerships with academia, think tanks and research centres.

This approach would be fully reflected in the strategic plan, to be submitted to the Executive Board's annual session of 2011.

22. UN-Women was scheduled to be formally launched on 24 February 2011, during the fifty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, which would provide an opportunity to support Member States and civil society partners in translating commitments and recommendations into concrete actions and determining how UN-Women could effectively advance such actions. UN-Women planned to engage in other important intergovernmental processes, including the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, to be held in Istanbul, Turkey, from 9 to 13 May 2011 and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio + 20), to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2012.

23. The Executive Director underscored that the establishment of UN-Women prioritized a strengthened country presence. To see a notable difference in the United Nations system's delivery at the country level, UN-Women required relevant and capable teams of experts to be provided where the needs were greatest. A field capacity assessment had been initiated to identify gaps in the capacity of UN-Women to assist national partners and United Nations country teams, and the findings would be used to address the most serious gaps in 2011 at the country level. The assessment, which was to have been completed in mid-February 2011, was informed by a partner survey with some 1,000 responses from more than 60 countries, field missions and partners, and a desk review of internal and external evaluations. The assessment would outline standard models of support that national partners expected at the country level, based on General Assembly resolution 64/289 on system-wide coherence.

24. Using the results of the assessment, UN-Women would propose, as part of the strategic plan, minimum capacities for countries in which UN-Women now had various types of presence. A plan for the phased strengthening of field capacity over the coming years would be developed, based on priority national needs and demand and existing UN-Women and United Nations country team capacity in each country, including the existence of dedicated gender experts among other United Nations partners in the country and whether a peacekeeping operation was present.

25. The transition to the new entity was complex, outside of the logical sequence and lacking the full required capacity. UN-Women was in the process of assembling the capacity needed to become the body envisioned in the founding resolution. Between September 2010 and January 2011, two budgets had been submitted, a new structure had been developed for headquarters staff and the alignment of existing staff was being completed. A new headquarters premises had been secured and business functions had been migrated to one common computer system. Moreover, the field capacity assessment had been initiated and the strategic planning process started. The ongoing programmatic commitments of the four constituent entities had continued to be supported.

26. However, much more needed to be done, including the installation of the senior management team and the moving of staff to new work units where they could create real change in the institutional culture. A support budget was being presented at the present session in a less than ideal situation. Ideally, decisions on resources from both the United Nations regular budget and support budget would be driven by the strategic plan and the field capacity assessment. However, the work of UN-Women could not wait until those budgets were completed. The entity's

management response (UNW/2011/4/Add.1) to the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (UNW/2011/4) had identified immediate steps for strengthening its ability to support countries, which could be approved without prejudging the Board's decision on the strategic plan.

27. The steps were aimed at achieving four objectives: (a) fulfil the immediate need to create the senior management structure; (b) start the process of strengthening and improving operational activities in 15 of the countries where UN-Women is present; (c) strengthen the ability to support national partners in other countries, including developed countries, from regional support hubs and subregional offices; and (d) provide a small number of key posts to address critical gaps in headquarters capacity. The cost of the proposal was $51.5 million.

28. In closing, the Executive Director expressed appreciation for the warm reception and support she had received from the many constituencies that helped UN-Women into being. At the same time, she was aware of both the results that were expected of UN-Women and the challenges faced in meeting them.

Discussion

29. Forty-one delegations responded to the Executive Director's statement. Among the speakers were the Secretary of State for Equality of the Ministry of Health and Social Policies of Spain, 23 Permanent Representatives of Member States and representatives of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and of the Gender Equality Architecture Reform campaign.

30. Delegations welcomed the creation of UN-Women, the appointment of Ms. Bachelet as Executive Director and the convening of the first session of the Executive Board. Many speakers called it a landmark day in the history of the United Nations. UN-Women represented the culmination of a reform process that had lasted several years, one that had the support of the international community and tremendous enthusiasm and goodwill. Ms. Bachelet's leadership would contribute positively to the well-being of women all over the world. Several delegations also welcomed the briefings by the Executive Director of regional groups during the previous weeks.

31. All speakers underlined their commitment to the new organization's success, emphasizing the need to empower women so that development, prosperity and security could be achieved. Speakers cited areas where UN-Women could make positive progress: enhancing women's economic empowerment, building national capacity and addressing gender-based violence, especially in conflict situations. Support was expressed for the role of UN-Women in mainstreaming gender concerns throughout the United Nations system, improving accountability and strengthening reporting on women's issues at the global, national and regional levels. Realistic targets must be set, and speakers realized that some actions could take much longer than 100 days to put in place.

32. Several speakers addressed the need for UN-Women to have substantially greater resources than those brought from the constituent entities. The plan to raise resources from the private sector and non-traditional donors was welcomed. The Women's Empowerment Principles, launched in 2010, were welcomed by many delegations and seen as an important tool for enhancing collaboration between

UN-Women and the private sector. It was noted that in difficult economic times, multilateral and bilateral aid reviews would clarify which organizations had the best track record in delivery, results and impact. It was critical to demonstrate results and to ensure that financial resources were spent as efficiently as possible.

33. One delegation announced its intention to double its core contribution to UN-Women in 2011. The Government of Japan noted its earmarked contribution of $4.5 million to the UN-Women project to assist the work of the Eliminate Violence against Women Commission in Afghanistan.

34. Many delegations underlined the key role of UN-Women in leadership, in that the United Nations system must pull together so that its efforts on gender amounted to more than the sum of its parts. UN-Women must have a clear, defined and distinctive role in which it carved out areas with comparative advantage. UN-Women should complement the work of other United Nations organizations whose mandates and experience meant that they were best placed to deliver in the areas where they were already working, and should strengthen collaboration with non-governmental organizations. A key to the success of UN-Women would be to achieve tangible progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women at the field level. Demand-driven support and customization of work to the individual needs of countries was supported. Some speakers emphasized the need to employ both international and national staff within the regions and called for equitable geographical representation among staff members.

35. One delegation, on behalf of the five Nordic countries, cited their collective contribution of close to 40 per cent of the budget of UN-Women. As strong proponents of women's rights, they recognized the need to seize the opportunity to shape a new and effective body. The group underlined the importance of strong partnerships at all levels in developing a strong Entity in both the normative and operational fields. An invitation to the Executive Director to visit the Nordic countries was extended. The group highlighted that UN-Women needed to address the issues of internal capacity and human resources and to assess its capacities at the country level, and that it must present a strategic plan. The delegations underscored the importance of delivering at the country level, where most of the budget should be spent, and of working closely with the larger United Nations system. Long-term results must be achieved, and UN-Women should be guided by results-based indicators and results-based management. Collaboration between different United Nations agencies and partnership with resident coordinators was of paramount importance to success. The delegation emphasized the importance of setting baselines for normative work in order to measure results for the future and the need for UN-Women to be bold in setting clear priorities.

36. Several delegations underlined the importance of specific areas of interest, such as universal primary education for girls and for women, maternal health, women in armed conflict, South-South cooperation and support to parliamentarians. The need to focus on women's political and economic empowerment was strongly supported, as a key to ending discrimination against women in all fields. Speakers emphasized the importance of basing the work on universally agreed norms while keeping in mind the specificities of each region.

37. Some delegations underlined the commitment of UN-Women to increasing the role of women in promoting peace and security and to ensuring the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace

and security. In that regard, UN-Women was expected to play a leadership role in putting into operation the use of indicators to monitor the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and also in accelerating women's participation in peacebuilding.

38. One delegation highlighted three requirements of the work of the Executive Board: to resolve disputes through constructive dialogue; to give priority to the requests of developing countries and to strengthen their capacity development; and to follow the principles of openness, transparency and equitable geographical distribution in the allocation of funds and human resources.

39. Many speakers cited their own national achievements towards women's empowerment and gender equality, including the compliance with international agreements such as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Millennium Development Goals and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Some delegations cited the need for the Executive Board to strengthen its coordination with the Commission on the Status of Women and other related United Nations bodies to form synergies.

40. The representative of FAO expressed the support of FAO for the work of UN-Women in poverty alleviation, food and nutrition security and agricultural policy, women's economic empowerment, the promotion of the rights of smallholder farmers, support to women's organizations for rural development, enhancing rural productivity, promoting decent rural employment for women, reducing child labour for boys and girls and advocating agricultural investment.

41. The Gender Equality Architecture Reform campaign, a network of more than 300 women's, human rights and social justice groups around the world that worked to support the creation of UN-Women, expressed its support for the Executive Director's vision and the 100-day action plan. The speaker noted that civil society had supported a $1 billion budget for UN-Women from the beginning and urged Governments to increase their financial support to ensure the success of the organization. The Gender Equality Architecture Reform campaign welcomed the commitment to create an NGO advisory group. In a conference room paper, the campaign presented suggestions for engagement with civil society. The speaker was hopeful that UN-Women would establish additional formal mechanisms of participation with civil society. The campaign also endorsed the continuation of funding by other United Nations bodies of programmes directed at women to ensure effective coordination, particularly at the country level.

42. The Executive Director thanked the delegations for their goodwill as well as their enthusiastic contributions and support for the vision of UN-Women and the action plan. She welcomed the participation of Member States and civil society in the consultative process leading up to the formulation of the strategic plan, which would be taken up at the annual session of 2011. She underlined the need for coherence and synergies with the United Nations system and the need for UN-Women to be relevant and create positive change for women and girls. In response to queries raised, she noted that UN-Women was in the process of building partnerships with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS. With regard to the relationship between the Commission and the Executive Board, a recent meeting of the Bureaux of the Commission and the Board, hosted by the President of the Economic and Social Council, had been convened to take steps to work together.

The joint meetings of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Executive Boards of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UN-Women and the World Food Programme (WFP), held on 4 and 7 February 2011, would present an opportunity to build coherence within the United Nations system.

II. Financial, budgetary and administrative matters

Proposals for the use of voluntary resources for the support budget for the biennium 2010-2011

43. The Executive Director presented the proposals for the use of voluntary resources for the support budget for the biennium 2010-2011 (UNW/2011/3) and the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions thereon (UNW/2011/4). She underlined the importance of discussion within the Executive Board, one that she hoped would be a continuing one, on how to build an Entity that was strong, responsive and effective in advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women. With the Board's guidance and support, the foundations of the four former entities would be built upon, creating one strong organization with the necessary capacity to provide its partners with timely and effective support.

44. The support budget was the vehicle for the sound and sustainable funding of the core infrastructure and human resources that would enable UN-Women to carry out its operational mandate. It should also facilitate effective governance by the Executive Board. The support budget was prepared in the first months of the existence of UN-Women, and before it became operational on 1 January 2011. It therefore did not have the benefit of a strategic plan, which would be presented to the Board in June 2011, nor the comprehensive data resulting from the field capacity assessment, which was still ongoing. It was also notable that UN-Women was not starting with a sound support budget from which to grow and that this did not offer an accurate baseline for understanding the core requirements of a new organization.

45. The budget proposal was centred on two major themes: first, to start to enhance the capacity of UN-Women to bolster its support at the country level in accordance with its mandate to do so on a universal basis; and second, to replace the legacy of past arrangements with a sounder institutional foundation on the basis of standards applicable to United Nations organizations.

46. To enable the support budget to be more transparent and effective, UN-Women planned to work closely with UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA towards harmonized budget methodologies, on which their Executive Boards had recently taken applicable decisions. Thereafter, UN-Women would progressively move to finance core support functions from a support budget funded from programme resources.

47. One of the challenges faced in preparing the support budget was the misalignment of the budgetary and programme processes in the first year of operations, with the budget being considered in January and the strategic plan in June.

48. Stimulated by the report of the Advisory Committee, UN-Women had identified a set of immediate measures for approval that would enable it to respond

to pressing demands without prejudging the decisions of the Board on its strategic plan, which were issued in the management response to the report of the Advisory Committee (UNW/2011/4/Add.1). In presenting the revised proposal, the main concern was to strengthen support for countries through measures at the regional, subregional and country levels. An immediate step was to develop UN-Women capacity in the six regional centres. UN-Women had subregional teams already in Bangkok, Dakar, Johannesburg, South Africa and Bratislava, which it proposed to strengthen, and would also develop a new presence in Panama and in Cairo. The regional centres would be sources of support for both developed and programme countries where UN-Women had no ongoing field presence.

49. Until the present time, programming at the country level had been overseen by 15 subregional offices, with four of them located in regional hubs. For 11 of those offices, the Executive Director proposed that the Executive Board agree to finance their core capacity from the support budget rather than programme resources, making it transparent to the Executive Board and subject to its decisions through the support budget process.

50. The Executive Director proposed that the Executive Board provide budgetary approval for core capacity for 15 country offices, defined in the past as including two posts in each country. This step involved changing the funding sources of existing posts and would have no net financial implication. New resources to equip UN-Women to respond to particularly complex programme requirements in up to two countries were proposed.

51. While overall the resource proposals focused on improving country support, the Executive Director also requested that the Board approve three posts for the senior management team, five other urgently needed posts at headquarters and two upgrades to the D-1 level. In terms of staffing, 32 new posts were proposed and a further 117 existing posts were proposed to be brought into the support budget from programme funding. The total cost of the support budget was $51.5 million. To this sum would need to be added the requirements for change management, the move of premises and some costs mandated by the General Assembly.

52. The Executive Director concluded that the UN-Women team and the Executive Board had much work to do together in developing the strategic plan, assessing field capacity and strengthening the internal workings of UN-Women to support its ambitious agenda. An update would be provided in June 2011 on the progress made in implementing the budget. Further proposals could be required in the light of the strategic plan and operational needs.

53. The Deputy Director of Organizational and Business Development Services presented the proposals for immediate support requirements contained in the management response to the report of the Advisory Committee. The purpose was to align the budget process with the Executive Board action on the strategic plan and to identify measures to be taken in advance of the strategic plan without prejudging it.

54. The costs for 2011 totalled $51.5 million, with 68.7 per cent ($35.4 million) in staffing costs; 12.6 per cent ($6.5 million) for rent and equipment; 8 per cent ($4.1 million) for reimbursement to UNDP; 3.5 per cent ($1.8 million) for operating expenses; and 7.2 per cent ($3.7 million) for travel, consultancies and other staff costs.

55. The volume of staffing included 32 new posts and 117 posts changed from programme funding to the support budget. The cost represented an $18.8 million increase in the 2010 budgets for the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women and the United Nations Development Fund for Women ($6 million in new capacity and $12.8 million from change in funding source). Changing funding sources was important for the stronger institutional foundation of UN-Women and accountability to the Executive Board.

56. In terms of programme country support, the focus would be on strengthening and improving country support in four ways: (a) to support UN-Women presence in the six regional centres; (b) to institutionalize core capacity in 11 subregional offices; (c) to give the authority to institutionalize capacity in 15 countries, guided by the strategic plan; and (d) to provide capacity for offices in 2 larger countries with complex programming arrangements.

57. In conclusion, the Deputy Director outlined the minimum requirements for country support at the regional centres, 11 subregional offices, 15 country offices and 2 country offices with complex programming requirements. At headquarters, the staffing needs included the headquarters senior management team (Assistant Secretary-General and two D-2s), five other urgent posts and the upgrading of two thematic cluster leaders from P-5 to D-1.

Discussion

58. Delegations welcomed the introductory presentations and the proposals contained in the management response to the report of the Advisory Committee, underlining the need for the Executive Board to approve the first budget for UN-Women so that the organization could begin its operations and assure minimum staffing requirements. The management response was seen as a good basis on which to move forward on a decision. Several speakers also noted the usefulness of the informal briefings and consultations held prior to the session.

59. Speakers, noting that the support budget was ambitious and presented prior to the strategic plan and field capacity assessment, underlined the need to manage for results and welcomed the presentation of the organization's first strategic plan at the annual session of 2011, which would enable future support budgets to be used as management tools. One delegation emphasized the importance of indicators in evaluating results.

60. Two delegations stated the intention of their Governments to maintain their core contributions at the current levels until the strategic plan was adopted, when the contribution levels would be reviewed and most likely substantially increased. Key elements to be considered in this regard were results orientation, cost-effectiveness and all operational aspects. The item scheduled for the annual session of 2011 on the review of the financial situation was welcomed. One delegation underlined the need to ensure that all interventions of UN-Women would be classified as official development assistance through consultation with the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

61. Many delegations welcomed the participation of UN-Women in discussions on the harmonization of budgets and results methodologies, including work towards an

integrated budget in 2014, cost classifications and results-based budgeting with UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA, and the planned discussion on this topic at the annual session of 2011.

62. Some delegations cited the possible effect of the economic and financial crisis affecting many countries in their levels of contribution to UN-Women. Speakers welcomed the intention of UN-Women to seek funding from non-traditional sources such as the private sector and foundations.

63. Some speakers anticipated further discussion about the rollout at the country level, including the number of offices and the proportion of international Professionals to National Officers. The need to avoid duplication and hierarchies in the relationship between regional and subregional offices was noted. Support was expressed for representation of UN-Women in all regions. One delegation underlined the importance of involvement in regional integration processes, such as in Central America, and welcomed the intention of UN-Women to have a presence in the United Nations regional team in Panama.

64. Various delegations expressed support for ensuring the security of UN-Women staff and also the need to ensure fair and transparent contractual arrangements.

65. In response to queries raised, the Executive Director agreed that measuring impact and producing results were of the utmost importance. She reiterated the role of UN-Women in enhancing United Nations system coordination in the work of gender equality and women's empowerment at the country level with cooperation to be sought within the United Nations country teams and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework process. She also addressed questions regarding subregional offices and staffing structure in the country offices and in the regional support centres. She noted that further discussion would take place at the annual session of 2011 in the context of the discussions on the results of the field capacity assessment and the strategic plan for 2011 to 2013.

66. The Executive Board, following informal consultations, approved the following decision:

2011/1 Biennial support budget for the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women for 2010-2011

The Executive Board,

1. *Stresses* the importance of enabling UN-Women to enhance its support to countries in their pursuit of gender equality and the empowerment of women and affirms its intention to support the Executive Director in the mobilization of voluntary resources;

2. *Takes note* of the proposals for the use of voluntary resources for the support budget for the biennium 2010-2011 (UNW/2011/3), the related report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (UNW/2011/4) and the management response to the report of the Advisory Committee (UNW/2011/4/Add.1);

3. *Welcomes* the commitment of the Executive Director to mobilize UN-Women and to achieve results in gender equality and the empowerment of women, and to implement its mandate under General Assembly resolution 64/289 without delay;

4. *Endorses* the priority attached by the Executive Director, in the management response to the report of the Advisory Committee (UNW/2011/4/Add.1), to providing universal access, to enhancing regional coordination mechanisms and to strengthening and improving support for countries through initial measures at the regional, subregional and country levels, as set out in paragraphs 13 to 29 of the management report, as well as to the establishment of the senior management team and the targeted strengthening of capacity at headquarters, as set out in paragraphs 9 to 12 and 30 to 35 of the report, and to report thereon to the Executive Board at its annual session of 2011;

5. *Recalls* that the composition and selection of staff of UN-Women shall be in accordance with the provisions of Article 101 of the Charter of the United Nations, with due regard to geographical representation and gender balance;

6. *Welcomes* the proposals of the Executive Director to enhance transparency and accountability to the Executive Board, while also strengthening the UN-Women institutional framework for support activities, by moving progressively to finance core support requirements through the support budget rather than programme resources;

7. *Approves* gross voluntary resources in the amount of $51.5 million, representing the total biennial support budget for 2010-2011 funded from voluntary resources;

8. *Approves* the additional amount of $2.5 million from voluntary core resources to cover United Nations-mandated security costs and $0.3 million for costs related to the adoption of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards and enhancement of the Atlas system;

9. *Approves* from voluntary core resources the additional amounts of $5 million to support change management and $3 million for the move of premises and related technology installation;

10. *Decides* that the total support budget for 2010-2011 funded from voluntary resources does not prejudge its decision on the strategic plan;

11. *Looks forward* to the consideration of, with a view to adopting, the strategic plan for 2011-2013 for UN-Women at its annual session of 2011, and notes, in this regard, that a consequent review of the support budget for 2011 may be required;

12. *Requests* the Executive Director to collaborate closely with the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Children's Fund towards the harmonization of budget and results methodologies, including in their work towards an integrated budget in 2014, cost classifications and results-based budgeting, to prepare for consideration, at the second regular session of 2011, of the 2012-2013 biennial support budget on the basis of such harmonization, to apprise the Executive Board on these matters and continue to work closely with the Executive Board in the development of this methodology;

13. *Recalls* General Assembly resolution 65/259, and requests the Executive Director to ensure that the proposed biennial support budget of

2012-2013 is prepared in accordance with paragraph 75 of General Assembly resolution 64/289 and that it reflects the analysis conducted as requested in section VI, paragraphs 8 and 9, of General Assembly resolution 65/259.

67. One speaker, on behalf of the African States, expressed satisfaction with the collaboration within the Board towards reaching a decision on the support budget as it was crucial that UN-Women should begin with a good start. His group looked forward to the implementation of the decision, especially paragraph 4.

68. The President emphasized the spirit of cooperation shown in the adoption of the decision and the strong commitment shown to UN-Women. She thanked the Vice-President of the Bureau, Mr. Magnus Lennartsson, who had served as facilitator of the informal consultations on the decision.

Proposed financial regulations and rules for the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

69. The Board decided to take up discussion of the proposed financial regulations and rules of UN-Women (UNW/2011/5 and Add.1) at a resumed first regular session, given the need for the Advisory Committee to meet and issue a report on the topic.

III. Other matters

Cooperation with the Commission on the Status of Women

70. Two delegations requested further information on cooperation between the Executive Board and the Commission. One speaker looked forward to further discussion on the topic at future Board sessions.

71. The President stated that the Bureaux of the Commission and of the Executive Board had met at the invitation of the President of the Economic and Social Council, to discuss linkages and common issues. Cooperation would be ongoing.

72. The Deputy Director for Organizational Services and Business Development cited the two sets of relationships: one between the Commission and UN-Women and the second between the Commission and the Executive Board. With regard to the latter relationship, he noted that the General Assembly, in paragraph 67 (b) of its resolution 64/289, requested the Economic and Social Council to establish appropriate and concrete linkages between the Commission and the Executive Board to ensure consistency between the overall policy guidance set by the Commission and the operational strategies approved by the Executive Board. With regard to the relationship between the Commission and UN-Women, the Assembly, in paragraph 57 (a) of the same resolution, decided that the Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on the Status of Women should constitute the multitiered intergovernmental governance structure for the normative support functions and provide normative policy guidance to UN-Women. UN-Women looked forward to the upcoming session of the Commission to play its role in that context.

73. One speaker requested that the Board take note of the fact that the United Republic of Tanzania was a "Delivering as one" pilot country, moving towards having a "One United Nations" programme and budget.

Closing remarks

74. The Senior Adviser to the Executive Director and head of the UN-Women transition team, on behalf of the Executive Director, delivered closing remarks. She thanked the Bureau and the members of the Executive Board for their thoughtful and considered response to the vision and action plan and for the approval of the decision on the support budget. She underlined the commitment of the Board to a dynamic and effective Entity that allowed it to make great strides in a short amount of time. The historic first regular session set an important precedent for working together, including the positive dialogue, flexibility and high level of consensus in the deliberations that established a valuable model for future interactions. That guidance would help shape the collective work towards developing the full strategic plan and achieving the goals of the organization.

75. During the session, she noted that several delegations had expressed support for the demand-driven approach outlined by the Executive Director, with customized programmes in each country. Many others had emphasized the need for a strong country presence. The field capacity assessment, to be completed in mid-February, would increase understanding on gaps and where UN-Women was most urgently needed, a core component and priority of the strategic plan. The road ahead would be challenging, and a strong and predictable financial resource base was essential to the organization's ability to provide strategic and sustainable support to the countries in which UN-Women works.

76. The Senior Adviser thanked those delegations that had announced increased financial contributions to UN-Women and those that indicated they would maintain previous contributions. The approval of the support budget allowed UN-Women to enhance country-level programmes, United Nations system coordination and national capacity development on gender equality and women's empowerment. With a qualified and robust management structure and staff, at headquarters and at the country level, the support budget and the strategic plan would be aligned in the coming months. Progress on implementing the budget would be presented at the annual session of 2011.

77. On behalf of the African States, one delegation appreciated the fact that the UN-Women logo would be unveiled at the Summit meeting of the African Union in Addis Ababa. The Summit was an excellent occasion for the Executive Director to establish collaboration with African leaders. The Executive Director's forthcoming visit to Liberia on International Women's Day (8 March 2011) was also welcomed, especially as she would be hosted by Africa's only female Head of State, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. These events were symbolic and sent a message to Africa that it was a major focus of UN-Women.

78. Two delegations took the floor to express appreciation to the President, the Executive Director and the secretariat for the successful outcome of the first regular session of the Executive Board, which was held in an atmosphere of cooperation. The speakers looked forward to participation and involvement in the Executive

Board and to the submission of the strategic plan in June 2011. One of the speakers underlined the importance of partnership and equality between men and women.

79. The President thanked the Bureau, the Executive Board members, observers, members of the United Nations family, non-governmental organizations and others for their strong support.